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# ANNUAL REPORT

To May, 1877.

TO THE MEMBERS OF

## THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

The Trustees of the Association for the year ending May, 1877, respectfully report :

The receipts during the year have been as follows :

Cash on hand at the beginning of the year....		\$1,540 68
Subscriptions to Fund, paid in.....		55,980 75
Annual Subscriptions.....		4,245 00
Centennial Loan-Exhibition.....	\$15,926 66	
Exhibitions, Entrance-money.....	1,893 75	
Castellani Loan-Exhibition, Entrance-money..	1,865 25	
Sales of Catalogues—Museum.....	1,018 00	
Sales of Catalogues—Castellani Loan-Collection	542 55	
Sales of Etchings.....	25 07	
Sales of Photographs.....	150 15	21,416 48
Department of Public Parks :		
on account of Appropriation for 1876.....	\$14,215 05	
on account of Appropriation for 1877.....	2,661 86	16,876 91
Receipts for year .....		<u>\$100,059 77</u>

The expenditures have been as follows :

Rent.....	\$6,666 67	
General expenses.....	8,907 08	
Salaries .....	2,600 00	
Fire-Insurance.....	1,575 13	
Taxes.....	2,781 75	
Gas and Coal.....	614 30	
Printing, Catalogues, Photographs, Stationery	747 08	
Alterations and Repairs.....	753 01	\$24,644 97
Bills Payable.....		16,000 00
Interest.....		997 19
Cesnola Collection.....		4,082 80
General Cesnola : on acc't bal. first Collection,	\$4,464 36	
on account of Curium Collection,	45,640 81	50,105 17
Show-cases.....		1,096 82
Signor A. Castellani, on account.....		102 25
Cash on hand, May 1, 1876 .....		8,080 57
Expenditures for year .....		<u>\$100,059 77</u>

The present financial condition of the Museum is as follows :

Total Subscriptions to Fund, paid.....	\$316,655 06	
Donations of Works of Art, value.....	73,425 50	
Balance at credit of Castellani Loan-Exhibition,	638 18	
	<u>\$390,718 74</u>	
Paid for Paintings, Drawings, etc.....	\$145,494 74	
Works of Art, Donations.....	73,425 50	
Cesnola Collection (\$21,074.26 gold still due) ..	115,833 04	
Kensington Reproductions.....	3,160 76	
Etchings.....	3,248 39	
Show-cases.....	9,315 67	
Furniture.....	1,417 84	351,835 94
General expenses and repairs (balance).....		35,742 23
Cash on hand, May 1st, 1877.....		3,080 57
		<u>\$390,718 74</u>

The Trustees have great satisfaction in reviewing the progress of the Institution during the past year. Founded with intent that it should become an educational Museum, it has already entered on its functions with great and widely spreading influences. The first Institution of its kind in America, it was necessary to expect that its progress would be slow, and that many years would elapse before it could acquire that hold on the people which would lead them to regard it as an important addition to the educational systems of the State and Country. But in this respect the anticipations of the Trustees have been already in great measure fulfilled. The increased attendance of visitors has abundantly illustrated the increased desire of our people for instruction in the history of art, and the readiness with which subscribers have responded to the call of the Museum for funds to enlarge its collections, affords ample assurance that they recognize the value of its influences.

The Trustees desire to make prominent the educational importance of the Institution. While the school-system affords to the youth of the country opportunities of learning, this must be at the best a limited kind of training which serves only to prepare the mind for that practical education which is necessary to

success in life. History may be studied in books, but the lessons of history can never be so well learned as when illustrated by the works of the men and the nations who made history. All the reading which a young artizan might do in the study of his trade, would not avail to make him a successful workman in wood or in metal until he had studied examples of the work itself ; nor will he ordinarily progress in any department of work, beyond the most simple utilitarianism, until the study of illustrations of high art in his trade has shown him that the great object to be attained is the union of the beautiful with the useful, and that it is quite as easy, and far more profitable, to make his work artistic. The collections of the Museum of Art are therefore of the utmost importance to the artizans of this country. Their influence is already felt, although they are but few. The earnest examination given to them on free days by men of the working classes, is one of the most gratifying indications of their usefulness. Nor is it in reference to the work and the products of the people alone that this usefulness is to be considered. The mere examination of such displays, the opportunity to look at and study the works of sculptors, painters, decorators, goldsmiths, carvers, and other able artists, who in all ages and countries have elevated the minds of men, has in itself a refining and civilizing influence. There can be no better illustration of this influence than is seen in the fact that although about a hundred thousand persons have within the past year visited the Museum (the attendance on single days amounting sometimes to thousands), there has been no instance brought to the knowledge of the Trustees of an indecorous or offensive occurrence. This influence, which pervades the galleries in the presence of works of art, has been carried to thousands of homes, and new subjects of thought and of conversation have been introduced with it. The study of mankind is best, and alone to be pursued, in such a Museum. The bringing together of the thoughts, in marble, in pottery, on canvas, in bronze, and gold and glass, of the various families of the human race in the various centuries, is in itself a powerful means of educating men in the knowledge of men—that knowledge which is essential above all things in a country where the people are the rulers.

There is not space within the limits of this report to dwell on the superior importance of the Museum among institutions for education, but the Trustees desire to say that while heretofore they have looked forward to such a position as in the distant future, they now congratulate the Members on the assured fact that the Museum to-day is not surpassed as an educational power among the people by any university, college, or seminary of learning in the metropolis. This power it is their hope and belief will be recognized throughout the State and Country, and, as means are afforded, it will be increased from year to year, and outlast the generation of men who have so freely contributed to its foundation.

It is with great satisfaction that the Trustees have witnessed as one of the marked influences of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the establishment in other large cities of similar Museums, whose local and spreading educational power will have vast effect on communities and country. Recognizing the manifest desire of the people to receive these influences, the Trustees have approved a plan, to be hereafter carried out, of lending for exhibition in different cities selections from the cabinets of the Museum, in order that art-education may be diffused among those of the people who have not the ability or opportunity to visit the metropolis. By this plan, when feasible, the beneficial effects of the Institution will be spread more widely among a people which, by its existing system of schools and academies, is eminently fitted to appreciate, and be instructed by exhibitions of the works of art of its fellow-men in countries and times less favored.

The Centennial year was marked by a special exhibition of works of art, for the joint benefit of this Museum and the National Academy of Design, under the charge and direction of a committee of gentlemen. Many of our citizens generously loaned to this exhibition valuable specimens of the paintings of eminent masters—most choice samples of modern art—which, arranged in the galleries of the Museum and of the Academy, formed an art-exhibition well worthy of the centennial year and of the metropolitan city. Over one hundred and fifty thousand persons, from all parts of America and Europe visited these galleries, witnessing an illustration of the achievements of the modern

world in the art of painting, such as has nowhere else been gathered in America for public inspection. Mr. August Belmont also, with great liberality, opened his private gallery for the same purpose, affording to the public an opportunity of examining his valuable collection.

After the close of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, the Trustees made an arrangement with Signor Alessandro Castellani, of Rome, to borrow his collections of Ancient, Mediæval and Modern Art for exhibition here. The arrangement included a pledge on the part of the Trustees that they would endeavor to raise funds for the purchase of these collections. This loan has enabled our visitors to study the interesting works of Grecian and Greco-Italian Art, which enrich the collection, and also to become acquainted with the ceramic work of Italy, in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, very few examples of which had before reached America. The collection, rich in specimens of many of the best *bottegas* of Italy, is especially valuable in its illustration of the lusted majolica of Gubbio. The number of visitors to this department of the loan-collection has been large; and the Trustees entertain the hope that an appreciation of the importance of these rare specimens will lead to a liberal subscription toward their purchase. Should this be effected, the Museum will have reason to be quite content with its illustrations of this department of Ceramic Art.

It is known to the Members of the Institution that after bringing to this country the collection of Cypriote antiquities purchased by the Museum in 1873, and assisting in its temporary arrangement in the present building, General L. P. di Cesnola returned to Cyprus, to resume the duties of the United States Consulate, and to occupy himself with further explorations in the island. He was exceedingly desirous that the results of his excavations should be added to the collections in the Metropolitan Museum, and to that end from time to time urged upon the Trustees the most generous and liberal propositions, looking forward to unknown discoveries. They, however, found themselves in no condition to enter into large pecuniary engagements, and were reluctantly compelled by the panic in the fall of 1873 to decline all the propositions of this indefatigable and accomplished explorer.

General Cesnola, however on his part, lost none of his interest in the Museum, and from time to time communicated to the Trustees, the progress and results of his work. In the course of 1874, he offered to the Museum a fine collection of golden objects and gems, the entire results in that description, of his excavations up to that time. These consisted of finger and ear-rings, bracelets, and a variety of ornamented objects, of Phœnician and early Grecian workmanship, including many articles of very great beauty and importance, numbering altogether by catalogue 226 objects. The Museum being without funds, the President advanced the amount for the purchase of this collection : it was forwarded to America, where it has been received during the past year, and the cost has been repaid. These objects are now arranged in the same room with the Curium treasures.

Meantime, General Cesnola, continuing his explorations, made, at the site of ancient Curium, the most interesting and important discovery of ancient art-treasures which has been effected in modern times. On the site of a temple, in that ruined city, he was led by his excellent judgment and keen scent of valuable relics, to sink a shaft some twenty feet below the mosaic pavement. Here he found a vaulted passage leading to a closed door-way, on breaking through which he entered the treasure-chambers of the temple. Four vaulted rooms, in succession, severally contained objects in gold, silver, pottery, alabaster, and bronze. The gold was mostly in the form of jewelry and ornaments for the person—the form on which art has in all times exerted its highest abilities. Bracelets in variety, necklaces of beautiful and characteristic patterns, amulets and ornaments of the most finished workmanship, ear-rings in a great number of forms, finger-rings of remarkable work, holding engraved stones which are gems, seals of similar stones held in massive handles of silver, bottles of crystal, one with golden mountings, the agate-sceptre of a king, a bowl of gold, cylinders of Babylonian or Assyrian make, steatite and other scarabæi from Egypt—these with a great variety of other articles were among the contents of the gold-room, numbering several hundred objects. The silver-room presented, even in the oxydized condition which ancient silver assumes, treasures no less important in art-view than the

gold. Well-preserved objects of ancient art in silver are exceedingly rare, and it was therefore a highly valuable contribution to the possessions of modern times, when among masses of corroded silver General Cesnola found some perfect cups and vases, small but very beautiful in form, and a few ornamented with engraved gold overlaid upon the silver. Piles of silver-dishes oxydized in mass, bore witness to the former richness of the room, a great number of heavy bracelets and armlets of solid metal were found well preserved : the fragments of several belts in silver for ladies, overlaid with fine gold and engraved in delicate and beautiful patterns, were among these relics, retaining in their curves the contour of the forms they encircled, and evincing a luxury and refinement in dress and ornament which has not been surpassed in any later civilization.

The objects in bronze and pottery were of extraordinary interest. In the latter were specimens of peculiar value, as they go to fill up the vacant space in ceramic history which lies between the Egypto-Phœnician work, so fully illustrated in our collections, and the period of the highest Grecian art. Among the objects in bronze, were large caldrons with ornamental handles, vases of great beauty, mirrors, weapons of various kinds, tripods, the bit from a bridle, the candelabra of the temple, the handle of a sceptre or of a weapon set with enamels and gems which shine out of the green corrosion, and many articles of domestic and religious use.

While these objects in themselves were of great value as mere gold and silver, and of more value as curiosities of antiquity, they rise into the highest value as illustrations of a period of art-history hitherto unknown. The temple of Curium was destroyed in, if not before, the Sixth Century before Christ. The time of its destruction, even at the latest, was a time of which Grecian history gives us little information except such as is traditional. The known history of Grecian art commences at this period. This treasure of ancient times, therefore, illustrates a volume of history the last page of which ends where the hitherto known history begins. When General Cesnola opened the doorway at the end of the vaulted passage, he did not know that this door was the long desired entrance to an art-history and a history of



man and of civilization preceding the earliest Grecian history, and leading back to the origins of Grecian art and civilization. If he had found nothing else but the engraved gems, these alone would have been of priceless value, being, prior to the dates heretofore accepted as times of rude and archaic work, gems worthy the artists of the best later period. This is not the time to enlarge on the importance, in art-history, of the discoveries at Curium. When they shall have been the study of archæologists, their value will be more fully realized.

General Cesnola was, hereupon, more than ever desirous that his later discoveries should be added to the Cesnola Collection, in the Museum. But the Trustees were without funds, the depressed state of financial affairs seemed to forbid any hope of accepting the liberal terms which he proposed, and they reluctantly abandoned for the time all idea of possessing the Curium treasures. The General accordingly transferred his new collection to England, and entered into negotiations with parties in France and England for their purchase. Pending these negotiations the Trustees, impressed with the importance of the object, determined on an appeal to the friends of the Museum to enable them to add the treasures of Curium to their former collections of Cypriote art. This determination was sudden, and the response to the appeal was instantaneous. Within a few days the sum of \$40,000 was pledged by patrons of art, ladies who are known as lovers of art leading the subscription-lists, and an agreement for the purchase was made with General Cesnola by Atlantic Telegraph.

The hearty devotion of the explorer to the Museum cannot be better shown than by quoting the last telegram, in the brief series by which the negotiation was completed—*"All right! three hearty cheers for our dear New York Museum."*

The Trustees have the pleasure of informing the Members that the Curium Treasure, together with the other results of the explorations of General Cesnola in Cyprus, since his return in 1874, have been received. The gold and silver objects, and selections from the other classes of articles, have been arranged for exhibition in the Museum building. A considerable delay has been necessary, for the reason that these extraordinary

illustrations of art-history are of various dates, extending through a long period of time, concerning which we have no guides. The simplest classification must therefore be a subject of careful study. No authorities are extant which afford any assistance in this work, nor can it now be completed. Many of the objects are evidently of a period not less than B. C. 1,400; and others date from this time down to the destruction of the temple at Curium. They are, in large number, the votive offerings of generations of worshipers in the temple; and many of them must have been regarded at the time of the destruction of Curium, as antique relics of long gone ages. The Trustees deem it proper at this point to express their sense of the generous conduct of General L. P. di Cesnola. After the purchase of the collection was completed, the General added to it as his personal gift, one of the most valuable necklaces, and other objects, which he had previously allowed to pass from his possession, and which he purchased and restored to the collection, in order that no missing article should mar the unity of the Curium treasures.

The Trustees record here their thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who so generously contributed to the purchase of these treasures. It is to their liberality that the American people owe the possession of these objects, exceedingly beautiful, but more important because they exhibit a history of art-manufactures, the work of the Phœnicians who assisted Solomon, and of their ancestors and descendants during a period of a thousand years, and of the Greeks concerning whom the extant Grecian historians have written only traditions. The Trustees desire specially to acknowledge the voluntary donation of £100 toward this fund by Miss Elizabeth Warne, of Penn Hill, Yeovil, Somersetshire, England.

The Trustees take great pleasure in stating that the Bryant Memorial Vase has been placed in the Museum, as a permanent deposit, by the honored and venerable poet and patriot to whose illustrious memory it is consecrated, and to whom it was presented on his eightieth birthday, by a large number of our citizens, who desired to make a fitting memorial, in a work of American art, to this great American Poet and lover of art. It was executed in silver by Messrs. Tiffany & Company of

this city ; and abundantly verifies the fact that the American workers in precious metals have no superiors in the modern world. The Vase has been accepted by the Trustees as a precious deposit, to remain forever in our collections, and be preserved with all that care with which William Cullen Bryant's fellow-citizens cherish *him*, and will always cherish his memory. And when—distant be the day—he shall have gone from among us, and visitors, old and young, look at it, this

— “to their softened hearts should bear  
 The thought of what has been ;  
 And speak of one who cannot share  
 The gladness of the scene,  
 Whose part in all the pomp that fills  
 The circuit of the summer hills  
 Is—that his grave is green ;  
 And deeply would their hearts rejoice  
 To hear again his living voice.”

The Museum has received a number of important donations during the year, a list of which is appended to this Report.

The Loan-collections of the Museum have been enriched during the year with works of art, kindly deposited with us for the gratification and instruction of the public, which has expressed its appreciation by continued and increasing attendance.

The total number of visitors during the year has been nearly 94,000.

The attendance on free days has been gratifying, especially from the visible interest taken in the exhibitions by the artisans and mechanics of New York with their families, who have crowded the rooms.

The usual arrangement for art-students has been continued. Free tickets were issued to the students of the Woman's Art School of the Cooper Union, of the Art Student's League, and to others on special application.

Progress has been made during the year in the building designed for the reception of the Museum-collections, in Central Park ; and it is confidently expected that the building will be ready for occupation before the close of the year 1878.

While the Trustees have so great satisfaction in reporting

the prosperity and the acquisitions of the Museum during the past year, they cannot omit the expression of their regret at failures to acquire other objects which would have been valuable additions to their collections. As in former years, many such objects have been offered to them, the purchase of which they have been compelled to decline. It is an error, not infrequently expressed, that the opportunity for the acquisition of valuable works of Old Art is passed. On the contrary, such objects are abundant in private hands, and America is especially rich in them. The interests of the Museum earnestly demand the provision of a fund which can be judiciously devoted to the purchase of such articles, often real treasures, which are from time to time offered, or which are met with in the possession of persons who would readily dispose of them. Many of these objects are of small pecuniary value when found singly, but become of the highest importance when gathered in illustrative collections. The Trustees beg the earnest attention of Members to this subject. The expenditure of a small sum in each year would result in collections which would be hereafter esteemed at their true and very high value.

The Trustees congratulate the Members at the close of the year on the assured position of the Institution. Its possessions are now so important, its ability to educate the young and the old is so fully established, its influence in the community and country at large has become so manifest, that it is regarded as an established Institution, of whose success not alone the Members but the City, the State, and the Country have reason to be proud. This success is but a beginning, and as yet the collections are small. The Trustees confidently expect the support of the Members, and the people of the whole country, in their continued endeavors to make the Institution a power among the educational establishments of America.

By order,

JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON,

*President.*